NIGGAFLEX GLOBAL

A CROWN OF COLD WHISPERS

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A Tale of Shadows, Steel, and Dust

VOLUME I

PROLOGUE

THE ASHES OF TASAWAR

The morning frost did not melt in Kundian; it merely turned to grey sludge under the heavy rubber boots of men who had no choice but to walk at dawn.

Tasawar Hussain wiped the black grease from his palms with a rag that had seen three winters and as many engine repairs. The air inside the Punjab Forest Department kitchen smelled of stale cardamom, damp firewood, and the bitter charcoal smoke that clung to his woolen shawl no matter how many times his wife washed it in the canal. Beyond the small, iron-grated window, the tall pines stood motionless against the pale pink dawn, their needles heavy with mist that dripped steadily onto the red brick yard below.

"The officers will want their chai at six sharp, Tasawar," the junior clerk said, stepping into the doorway with his arms wrapped tight around his ribs. He was a young man from the city—soft-handed, thin-skinned, and already shivering before the sun had cleared the ridge of the salt range. "Make it strong today. The inspector was complaining of the draft in his quarters all night."

"The tea is already brewing, babu-ji," Tasawar said softly. His voice had the flat, quiet cadence of the salt range—words spent sparingly, like copper coins in a dry year.

He stirred the brass pot over the dying coals. The steam rose, warm and milky, carrying a fleeting comfort into the damp room. He was a cook, the son of a cook, and his father before him had served men who wore ironed khaki uniforms with silver buttons. It was honest work, but it was small work. It left no mark upon the earth save for the quiet soot on the kitchen walls and the steady, rhythmic ache in his lower back when the cold settled into the brick floor.

In the inner pocket of his waistcoat rested a folded piece of paper—a letter from his brother in the lower valley, brought by the bus driver two nights past. *The land is yielding less,* it had read in crude, sprawling ink. *The tubewell pump needs a new belt. Send what you can, Tasawar. The winter is coming on hard.*

He squeezed his eyes shut for a heartbeat, feeling the heavy, familiar weight behind his ribs. He had sons, a quiet three-room house made of unburnt brick, and forty years of labor behind him. In a world governed by land titles, government stamps, and family lineages, a cook’s family lived on the paper-thin margin between the frost and the flame.

"Tasawar," the clerk called again, leaning against the doorframe, picking at his fingernails. "Your eldest lad... I saw him down by the bus stop yesterday evening. Standing near the engine oil stalls with a little black machine in his hands. Pointing it at the road, at the dust, at old man Din sleeping on the wooden benches."

Tasawar did not look up from the boiling milk. "He is young, babu-ji."

"People talk," the clerk noted, a faint, careless smirk curling the corner of his mouth. "They say he thinks he’s a journalist from Lahore. They say he’s going to make a name for himself on the wire. A cook's boy talking about 'media'."

"He is a good boy," Tasawar said quietly, his hand steady as he lifted the heavy brass kettle from the iron hook. "He works when there is work."

"Dreaming is cheap," the clerk muttered, turning back toward the hallway. "It’s the waking up that costs a man."

When the kitchen was empty again, Tasawar poured the tea into four small china cups. His hands were thick, the knuckles swollen from years of icy river water and hot brass, but they were precise. He looked out the small window toward the south, where the rutted dirt road wound away toward his house.

Let him dream, the old man thought, his thumb tracing the worn edge of the kettle. *God knows I have given him nothing else to carry into this world.*

CHAPTER I — THE SALT RANGE, 2022

TWENTY RUPEES

Pain has a physical sound before it has a name. It is the sharp, dry crack of timber snapping under strain, followed by an absolute silence in which the mind refuses to accept what the body already knows.

When Rafaqat fell in the dust outside the timber yards of Kundian, the sky above him did not darken, nor did the world pause its indifferent churning. The winter of 2022 was arriving with a dry, bitter frost that turned the mud ruts into jagged stone. He lay on his right side, his breath rising in white, ragged plumes, watching his left arm rest against the cold earth at an unnatural, sickening angle.

The pain did not arrive immediately; first came the numbness, vast and hollow, followed by a throbbing heat that radiated from the shattered wrist up to his shoulder. He rolled onto his knees, gasping, his right hand instinctively reaching into the pocket of his faded trousers to pull out whatever coin or comfort he possessed.

His fingers brushed against a single piece of paper. He pulled it out.

A twenty-rupee note. Soft, creased at the corners, smelling faintly of tobacco and kerosene from the local store.

Rafaqat sat in the grey dirt, clutching that single crumpled note with his uninjured hand, his teeth grinding against the blinding agony in his left arm. Twenty rupees. That was the entirety of his personal fortune. That was the sum total of what he carried into a world that demanded thousands for medical plaster, thousands for rent, thousands for the simple privilege of sitting in a heated room.

Tears—hot, unbidden, and bitter—scalded his dust-caked cheeks. He did not cry from the fracture in his bone; he cried from the terrifying realization of his own insignificance. If his father, Tasawar Hussain, fell ill tomorrow, if the Forest Department kitchen ceased to need an old cook's calloused hands, this twenty-rupee note was the shield standing between his family and absolute ruin.

He tucked his broken arm against his chest, gritted his teeth until his jaw ached, and began the long, agonizing walk toward the district clinic.

"Hold steady, boy," the old apothecary muttered hours later, wrapping the coarse, plaster-soaked bandages tightly around his forearm. The smell of wet chalk and antiseptic filled the small room. "You won't be lifting heavy timber for six months. Maybe longer."

Rafaqat looked down at the hardening white cast. He felt no despair now, only a cold, quiet slate being wiped clean inside his mind.

"I won't be lifting timber at all, uncle," Rafaqat whispered, his voice trembling slightly, though his eyes remained fixed on the hardening plaster.

"Then what will you do?" the old man asked, knotting the bandage. "A cook's son has only his hands."

Rafaqat slowly stood up, placing his uninjured right hand back into his pocket, wrapping his fingers around the twenty-rupee note one last time as if swearing a secret oath to it.

"I will build something that cannot break," he said.

CHAPTER II — THE ROOM WITHOUT A BED

THE THOUSAND KIN

The bedroom had no bed. It had a floor of unpolished grey cement that retained the damp chill of the earth, a single woven mat (*chattai*) pushed against the far wall, and a low wooden stool where his camera sat like a dark, expectant eye.

Rafaqat sat cross-legged on the cold floor, the plaster cast on his left arm resting heavy on his lap. In his right hand, he held a cheap, second-hand mobile phone with a hairline crack across the display. The screen cast a blue, flickering light across his face as he scrolled through his contacts list.

One thousand names. Uncles, second cousins, village elders, distant relatives spread across the districts of Mianwali, Bhakkar, and Khushab. They were the bloodline—the vast, sprawling web of kin that his father always spoke of with quiet reverence during family gatherings.

> *“We are of the same soil,” his father used to say over tea. “When one of us stands, the family stands with him.”*

Rafaqat’s thumb hovered over the send button. He had spent three nights drafting the message, polishing every word so it sounded respectful, humble, and full of hope:

> *“Respected Elders and Brothers, As-salamu alaykum. I have launched a digital channel, 'Rafaqat Life Style', to document the beauty, hard work, and honest life of our people in Kundian. I request you to click this link, subscribe, and share it with your households. With your support of 1,000 subscriptions, my journey can officially begin.”*

He pressed send. The digital signal vanished into the ether, carrying his dream to a thousand handheld screens across the province.

Rafaqat set the phone down on the wooden stool, closed his eyes, and leaned his head back against the bare brick wall. In his mind, he had calculated the mathematics of loyalty:

if only half of them clicked the link tonight, he would reach the threshold required by the platform within twenty-four hours. His father would no longer have to bow his head to junior clerks. They could buy better lighting for the room. They could buy a proper bed.

An hour passed in absolute silence, save for the distant barking of village dogs and the hum of the night wind through the pine trees.

Then, the phone vibrated.

Rafaqat sat up quickly, his heart hammering against his ribs. He unlocked the screen. It was not a notification of a new subscriber. It was a voice note in a family WhatsApp group, forwarded from his uncle’s eldest son.

Rafaqat tapped the play button.

> *“...Did you see what Tasawar's boy sent?” a voice laughed—a sharp, nasal chuckle accompanied by the background clatter of teacups. “A 'vlogger'! The cook's son wants us to watch him walk around Kundian with a stick! He thinks he is a film star now because he broke his hand and can't carry firewood!”*

Another voice joined in, louder and more mocking: “*Tell Tasawar to teach his lad how to chop onions properly first. YouTube won't fill an empty stomach when the winter ends!*”

More messages followed. Screenshots of his channel with zero views circulated with laughing emojis. No subscribers came. The count on his screen remained stubbornly, brutally stuck at **12**.

Rafaqat stared at the glowing display. The shame did not burn; it froze him from the inside out. He turned off the light, wrapped himself in a thin, worn quilt, and lay down on the cold cement floor.

In the dark, with the chill of the unheated room seeping through the thin cotton into his bones, the son of Tasawar Hussain buried his face in his blanket and wept. He cried quietly, making no sound so his parents in the adjacent room would not hear, his body shaking violently as the phantom pain of his broken wrist mixed with the absolute cruelty of his own bloodline.

They had not merely refused to help; they had taken his vulnerability and turned it into entertainment for their tea stalls.

When his tears finally ran dry in the early hours of the morning, Rafaqat sat up in the dark. He wiped his face with the back of his right hand. The room was still cold, the floor was still bare cement, and his relatives were still mocking him.

He picked up his phone, deleted the family group from his application, and opened his editing software.

“No more links,” he whispered to the dark room. “No more begging.”

CHAPTER III — THE ASCENT

THE BLOOD AND THE LENS

The algorithm of the world does not care about lineage, nor does it care about bitter relatives. It cares only for truth, raw and unvarnished.

For eighteen months, Rafaqat worked with the fanatic discipline of a man running out of time. While the town slept, he edited videos until his eyes bloodshot and his vision blurred. He filmed the real Kundian—not a grand, polished spectacle, but the quiet, dignified beauty of survival. He filmed the golden light breaking over the salt hills; he filmed his father's swollen, calloused hands stirring the brass pot in the Forest Department; he filmed the cold morning mist clinging to the sugarcane stalks.

He spoke to the camera not as a performer, but as a survivor speaking to those who knew what it meant to carry a twenty-rupee note in an empty pocket.

And slowly, miraculously, the world began to listen.

It did not start with his relatives. It started with strangers—a trucker in Quetta, a student in Lahore, an overseas worker in Dubai longing for the red dust of Punjab. They found his channel in the vast sea of noise because his voice carried no deceit.

Ten thousand subscribers became fifty thousand. Fifty thousand became two hundred thousand.

The digital counter on his screen was no longer a mocking clock; it was a roaring furnace. Messages of support poured in by the thousands. His name—*Rafaqat*—was no longer spoken with a smirk in the tea stalls of Kundian; it was spoken with a mixture of awe and heavy, cautious envy.

Then came the afternoon the black SUV pulled up to his house.

It was a hot Tuesday in July. The dust hung thick in the afternoon heat as three men stepped out of the vehicle, dressed in fine cotton *kurtai* with polished leather shoes. They

were his uncles—the very same men who had forwarded his broken-arm message two years prior, the same men who had laughed over their teacups.

Rafaqat stood in the courtyard of his home. The unburnt brick walls were now reinforced with solid concrete, and in his bedroom, a proper wooden bed sat proudly off the floor.

“Rafaqat, my boy!” the eldest uncle called out, expanding his arms with a wide, greasy smile as he crossed the yard. “Look at you! The pride of our family! We were just saying at the main house yesterday that no one has honored our bloodline like Tasawar’s son!”

Rafaqat did not step forward to embrace him. He stood beside his camera tripod, his right hand resting lightly on the metal frame, his gaze cool and unreadable.

“Uncle,” Rafaqat said quietly.

“We have a proposal for you, nephew,” the second uncle chimed in, wiping sweat from his neck with a silk handkerchief. “Our home... we are renovating the front lawn. We want you to bring your camera, come spend three days with us, and make a vlog about our lifestyle! Show the world how our family lives! It will get millions of views!”

The courtyard fell dead silent. His father, Tasawar, stepped out from the kitchen doorway, watching his son with quiet, cautious eyes.

Rafaqat looked at his uncles. He looked at their polished shoes, their clean hands, and the artificial warmth in their eyes. He remembered the cold cement floor of his bedroom. He remembered the sound of their laughter echoing through his phone speaker while his wrist throbbed with white-hot agony. He remembered the twenty rupees in his pocket.

A faint, cold smile touched the corner of Rafaqat’s lips.

“No,” Rafaqat said.

The eldest uncle froze, his smile stiffening. “What do you mean, 'no'? We are your blood, boy. We are inviting you into our home.”

Rafaqat stepped closer, his voice dropping to a low, razor-sharp whisper that carried across the quiet yard:

“No. I have no time for you. The first time I reached out to you, when my hand was broken and my heart was in the dirt, you told me you had no money in your pocket and no care in your heart. You laughed when I had nothing.”

“Rafaqat, that was just a joke—”

“You made your choice when I was in the dark,” Rafaqat interrupted, pointing toward the open gate leading out to the dirt road. “Do not seek my light now that I have reached glory. Get out of my yard.”

The uncles stood stunned, their faces flushing red with humiliation. For a moment, the eldest opened his mouth to curse, but the cold, steady glare in Rafaqat’s eyes silenced him. Without another word, the three men turned, climbed back into their vehicle, and sped away, throwing up a cloud of white dust that settled slowly over the road.

Tasawar Hussain walked over to his son. He placed a heavy, calloused hand on Rafaqat’s shoulder. He said nothing, but the pride in the old man's eyes was brighter than the midday sun.

Rafaqat had taken his revenge. He had reached the summit. But he did not know that at the peak of every mountain, the wind blows cold enough to destroy a man.

CHAPTER IV — THE RAVAGER

THE SHADOW OF ROMAN

Glory is a fragile kingdom; it attracts those who wish to live in its warmth, but it drives those who live in the dark into a deep, poison madness.

His name was Roman. He did not come from Kundian, nor did he have a face that Rafaqat recognized in the street. He was an ghost of the digital void—a creator who had tried and failed, a man whose heart had turned to ash after watching others achieve what he believed he was owed.

Roman did not merely dislike Rafaqat; he hated him with a obsessive, consuming fury. To Roman, Rafaqat's humble background was a lie, his success an insult, and his quiet dignity an unbearable provocation.

It began with subtle comments under Rafaqat's uploads:

> *@Roman_Reigns_Official: "Fake humble. Cook's son buying views."*
> *@Roman_Reigns_Official: "Look at his eyes. He deceives his audience. Fraud."*

Rafaqat ignored them. He had survived the mockery of his own bloodline; he thought the random noise of a stranger could never hurt him.

He was wrong.

Roman did not work alone. He gathered a network—a gang of bitter, envious accounts, discord groups, and drama channels hungry for a target. They synchronized their strikes. Whenever Rafaqat went live to speak with his supporters, Roman and his legion flooded the chat with thousands of bots, throwing vile insults, doctored images, and false accusations about Rafaqat's family.

> *"Your father stole from the Forest Department!"*
> *"Fake accent! Fake story! Where did the money really come from?"*
> *"Arrogant fraud who disowned his own family!"*

Every live broadcast became a slaughterhouse. Rafaqat would sit before the camera, trying to maintain his calm, but the chat scrolled so fast with hate that genuine comments were swallowed entirely.

Roman started creating entire dedicated videos—framing Rafaqat's past statements, cutting his clips out of context, and building a false narrative that Rafaqat was an arrogant, cruel man who used his broken hand as a marketing sob story.

"Why do you read them, son?" Tasawar asked one night, entering the bedroom to find Rafaqat sitting in front of his monitor, his eyes bloodshot, his face pale as paper.

"They are destroying everything I built, Baba," Rafaqat whispered. His voice was hollow, devoid of the fire that had once carried him through the winter of 2022. "I can block ten accounts, and Roman creates twenty more. I block twenty, and he brings a hundred. They are everywhere."

"Turn the machine off," the old cook urged softly. "The real world is here. The trees are here. The tea is hot."

"The real world doesn't pay for your medicine, Baba!" Rafaqat snapped, instantly regretting his tone as his father flinched slightly. Rafaqat covered his face with his hands. "I'm sorry... I'm sorry. But my name... they are smearing my name across the entire province."

Night after night, Roman dragged him down. The toxicity seeped into Rafaqat's mind like water into an unburnt brick wall, softening his resolve, weakening his spirit. The joy of creating turned into a terrifying obligation. Every time he picked up his camera, he didn't see the light of Kundian; he saw Roman's sneering comments waiting for him in the dark.

The humiliation grew too heavy to carry. In late 2024, after a particularly brutal harassment campaign that brought his comment section to a complete standstill of hate, Rafaqat broke.

He did not post an explanation. He did not make a farewell video.

He simply logged out. He packed his camera back into its leather case, put it inside his closet, and closed the door.

The world watched the screen go dark. Days turned into months. The algorithm, unfeeling and swift, moved on. Other creators rose, took his place, and filled the feeds. The name *Rafaqat* began to fade from daily conversations, dissolving into the endless noise of the internet.

The world had forgotten him. But in the quiet, dusty silence of Kundian, Rafaqat could not forget the glory he had touched—and lost.

CHAPTER V — THE EXILE

THE DREAM OF STARS

For two years, Rafaqat lived as a ghost in his own town.

He walked the dirt tracks with his hands thrust deep into his jacket pockets, his eyes fixed on the dust beneath his boots. He took odd jobs in the market—helping shopkeepers arrange inventory, carrying light crates at the bus station—anything to keep his mind from drifting back to the black screen sitting in his closet.

People occasionally recognized him.

“Hey, aren't you that boy who used to make videos?” a youth at the tea stall would ask.

Rafaqat would merely shake his head, offer a polite, empty smile, and walk away faster.

The silence was safe, but it was an empty kind of safety—the peace of a graveyard. He felt like an old sword left out in the rain, its sharp edge slowly consumed by rust until it was indistinguishable from iron scrap.

Then came the night of the dream.

It was the deep middle of winter. The wind was howling down from the salt hills, rattling the glass panes of his bedroom window. Rafaqat slept fitfully under his thick quilt, dreaming of cold river water and broken plaster casts.

In his dream, he was standing in the center of a vast, unlit stadium. There were no cameras, no screens, no comments scrolling through the dark. There was only a sea of faces—thousands upon thousands of people stretching into the midnight sky.

They were not shouting insults. They were holding up tiny lanterns, their faces illuminated by warm, golden light.

And then, a single voice rose from the crowd, followed by another, until it became a deep, thunderous chant that shook the earth beneath his feet:

“STAR RAFAQAT! STAR RAFAQAT! STAR RAFAQAT!”

He looked down at his hands in the dream. They were not broken. They were not small. They held a blinding, radiant light that cut through the darkness of the stadium.

Rafaqat woke up with a sharp gasp, sitting bolt upright in his bed.

Sweat was dripping down his neck despite the freezing air in the room. His heart was hammering against his ribs with the same wild, fierce rhythm it had possessed back in 2022 when he had sworn his oath over a twenty-rupee note.

He looked across the dark room toward the closet.

“It isn't over,” he whispered, his breath rising in the cold air. “The journey isn't finished.”

CHAPTER VI — THE FINAL STAND

THE FADING ERA

Rebuilding a fallen kingdom is ten times harder than building one from the dirt.

When Rafaqat opened his closet and pulled out his camera, the lens was covered in a fine layer of Kundian dust. He blew it clean, charged the batteries, and logged back into the channel that had sat dormant for two long years.

He posted a simple video titled: **“I Have Returned.”**

The response was not the explosive wildfire he had hoped for. The internet had changed. The audience he once knew had grown up, moved away, or found new creators to fill their time. Roman’s old smear campaigns still lingered like ghost code in the search bars, making new viewers cautious.

Yet, Rafaqat fought with everything left in his soul.

For months, he pushed himself past human limits. He filmed endlessly, edited through sleepless nights, tried every new format, every strategy, every trend. He managed to rally a small, fiercely loyal core of followers back to his side. The view counts began to creep upward—ten thousand, thirty thousand, fifty thousand.

He was grinding his bone to dust to recreate the magic of his golden age.

And then, on a quiet evening in late autumn, as he sat reviewing his analytics after an eighteen-hour editing session, the brutal, unvarnished truth settled over him like a cold shroud.

He looked at the numbers. He looked at the engagement graphs. He looked at his own reflection in the dark monitor screen.

He saw the deep lines around his eyes, the grey hair touching his temples, and the faint, permanent stiffness in his left wrist.

He realized what he was doing: he was a ghost chasing his own shadow.

The era of *Rafaqat Life Style*—the raw, wild, explosive era that had defined his youth—was not something he could resurrect. It belonged to a specific moment in time, a moment born from a broken wrist, a twenty-rupee note, and a young man's desperate fury.

The digital landscape had evolved into something fast, noisy, and commercial. The quiet, soulful storytelling he brought to the table was an ancient language in a world that only wanted fleeting noise.

He sat back in his chair, breathing slowly. A strange, profound peace washed over him—not the bitter despair of his past downfall, but a deep, golden acceptance.

“I reached the glory,” Rafaqat said softly to the empty room. “I took my revenge. I built the bed for my father. I proved that a cook's son could make the world pause.”

He realized then that a true legend does not need to rule forever. A legend is marked by the mark it leaves upon the heart of the world while it is there. He had been written into the history of his people; his story would be passed down in the tea stalls of Kundian for decades—the story of the boy who rose from twenty rupees to conquer the wire.

He did not need to be the present anymore. He had already become immortal in the past.

Rafaqat opened his channel's dashboard one last time. He did not delete the channel. He left every video, every vlog, every piece of his soul right where it belonged—standing as an eternal monument in the digital wilderness.

He turned off the computer. He packed the camera into its leather case, locked it, and placed it gently inside the wooden trunk at the foot of his bed.

He stepped out onto the porch of his house. The evening sun was dipping below the salt hills, casting long, crimson shadows across the dirt road of Kundian. The wind blew cold and steady through the pine trees, carrying the scent of woodsmoke and rain.

Rafaqat walked down the front steps, pulled his woolen shawl tight around his shoulders, and let himself step into the quiet, unhurried tide of the world.

He walked past the timber yards, past the bus stop, and down toward the banks of the canal where the water ran dark and silent toward the river.

There would be no more updates. No more posts. No more announcements.

The tide took him into its gentle, eternal fold, and the son of Tasawar Hussain vanished from the digital world—never to be seen on a screen again, but never, truly, to be forgotten.